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Testimony on Senate Bill 463, An Act Concerning Financing of Energy Efficiency
Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my input on Senate Bill 463, An Act Concerning Financing of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. This bill presents a daunting challenge to some central pieces of CT's long-term commitment to increasing renewable energy development here in the state. The goals that CT has in place not only demonstrate our legislature and the public's support for these new technologies, but they also represent a plan to help CT become less dependent on fossil fuels, a goal that will have a positive impact on both the health and the pocketbooks of your constituents and my company's customers.

I work for Sunlight Solar, a company that designs and installs solar arrays for homes and businesses throughout CT, and our work deploying Class I renewable on hundreds of rooftops throughout the state has been assisted by the existence of these clear-cut goals. We have been able to grow, employ CT residents, and help communities businesses and homeowners gain control of their energy costs due to programs that help our state reach for the ambitious target of 20% Class I & II renewable by 2020.

Certainly the bill has a name that we can understand and support, since financing of both energy efficiency and renewable energy projects is an important piece of the puzzle. In 2008 and 2009 the CT Solar Lease program demonstrated that financing tools can help increase both interest and implementation of Class I renewable energy projects here in the state. A benefit of this program is that CT will see those 8-900 households demanding remarkably less energy from fossil fuel sources over the next 2-4 decades (solar panels are typically designed to operate well for up to 40 years) in some cases they have covered their electric needs entirely by installing solar.

While financing plays a key role in making Class I renewable energy projects happen, it is certainly not the only lever that has an impact on solar project development. As you all know well, there is a lot of buzz around renewable energy, and the industry is a nimble one – constantly shifting and adjusting to react to changes in markets. All around us other states are ramping up their commitments to deploying renewable energy, and Sunlight Solar has set up a healthy business here in CT that we to keep investing in and growing over time, if the marketplace here allows it. Maintaining the strong RPS as-is will help CT keep a goal-based system that provides a subsidy based on power production, and sticking with solid goals, clear production-based subsidies is the kind of predictability that gives us a baseline to plan. I hope you will resist the changes in SB463 that would make CT a less-friendly place for solar companies to do business.

Sincerely,
John Chamberlain
CT Office Coordinator
Sunlight Solar Energy